



Californians for High Speed Rail

A Statewide Coalition of High Speed Rail Supporters | 337 Green St. San Francisco, CA 94133 | 510.931.0384

Honorable Senator Diane Feinstein

June 25, 2009

Re: PASS NEW TRANSPORTATION BILL IN 2009

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Thanks to your leadership in the Senate, working alongside President Obama and others in Congress, California appears to be in line to receive billions in stimulus money for our High Speed Rail network over the next few months, in our moment of great economic need. The stimulus funds have given new momentum to the California system that would otherwise stalled due the current economic downturn. **It is critical that Congress continue that momentum in the year ahead, by acting to pass a new transportation bill this year.**

House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chair James Oberstar has introduced a draft transportation bill in the House. While that bill is currently not complete, several reports assert that the Chairman is proposing \$50 billion for High Speed Rail programs across the country. The California high speed rail network will require several billion dollars in Federal funds, in addition to the anticipated stimulus funds, to construct the initial San Francisco to Los Angeles/Anaheim line. Therefore, it is essential that the Federal transportation bill provide enough funds to cover both the California system and the other networks across the country necessary for high speed rail to gain broad political support in the Congress.

The new transportation bill coming out of the Senate needs to contain a game-changing amount of funds for high speed rail. The proposed \$50 billion dollars is a great starting point. We are advocating for even more to really jump start construction of high speed rail networks across the country. The current re-authorization offers the opportunity to bring much needed reforms to federal transportation policy and assure that the high speed rail network voters approved last fall is built quickly and efficiently.

Lengthy delay of the re-authorization process for the transportation bill brings real economic costs and political risk. Many long-term rail and transit projects that would extend beyond, or were not adequately funded by SAFETEA-LU, will be stymied until a new transportation bill is passed. In the current recessionary environment, more transportation stimulus is needed. An eighteen month delay would also push any re-authorization past the 2010 mid-term elections. This raises the possibility that progressive transportation policies such as high speed rail will no longer be a priority if Republicans gain senate seats. Also, the specter of the 2012 presidential elections interfering with the re-authorization process could become a real problem.

We recognize that Congress is dealing with several important issues, including health care reform and climate change. A 90-day continuing resolution would seem prudent to give the Senate until the end of the year to pass this important legislation. **A re-authorization and reform of the transportation bill this year is critical to both keep the momentum for California's high speed rail network and to help our state's economy recover in the year ahead.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Stanke', written in a cursive style.

Brian Stanke, Executive Director,
Californians for High Speed Rail

cc: Honorable Senator Barbara Boxer
Honorable Congressperson Nancy Pelosi